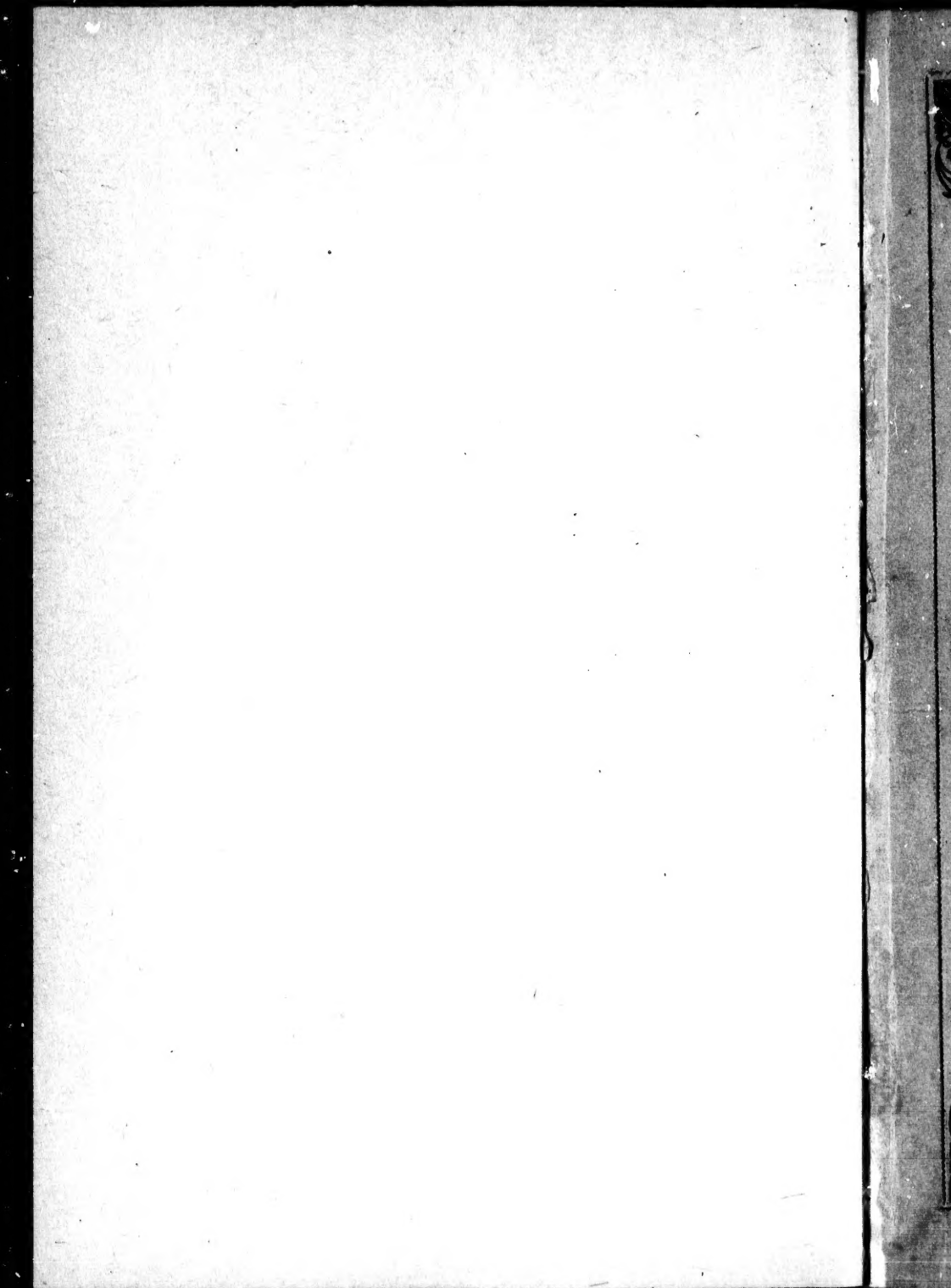




To be returned.

TRINITY CHURCH

AND

ITS FOUNDERS.

A

SERMON,

BY

THE REV. L. W. D. GRAY, D. D.

RECTOR OF THE PARISH OF ST. JOHN, N. B.

PREACHED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY,

1854,

AND

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF

THE VESTRY.

**"He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation;
My Father's God, and I will exalt Him,"**

Exod. xv. 2.

SAINT JOHN, N. B.:

PRINTED BY HENRY CHURCH & COMPANY,

PRINCE WILLIAM STREET.

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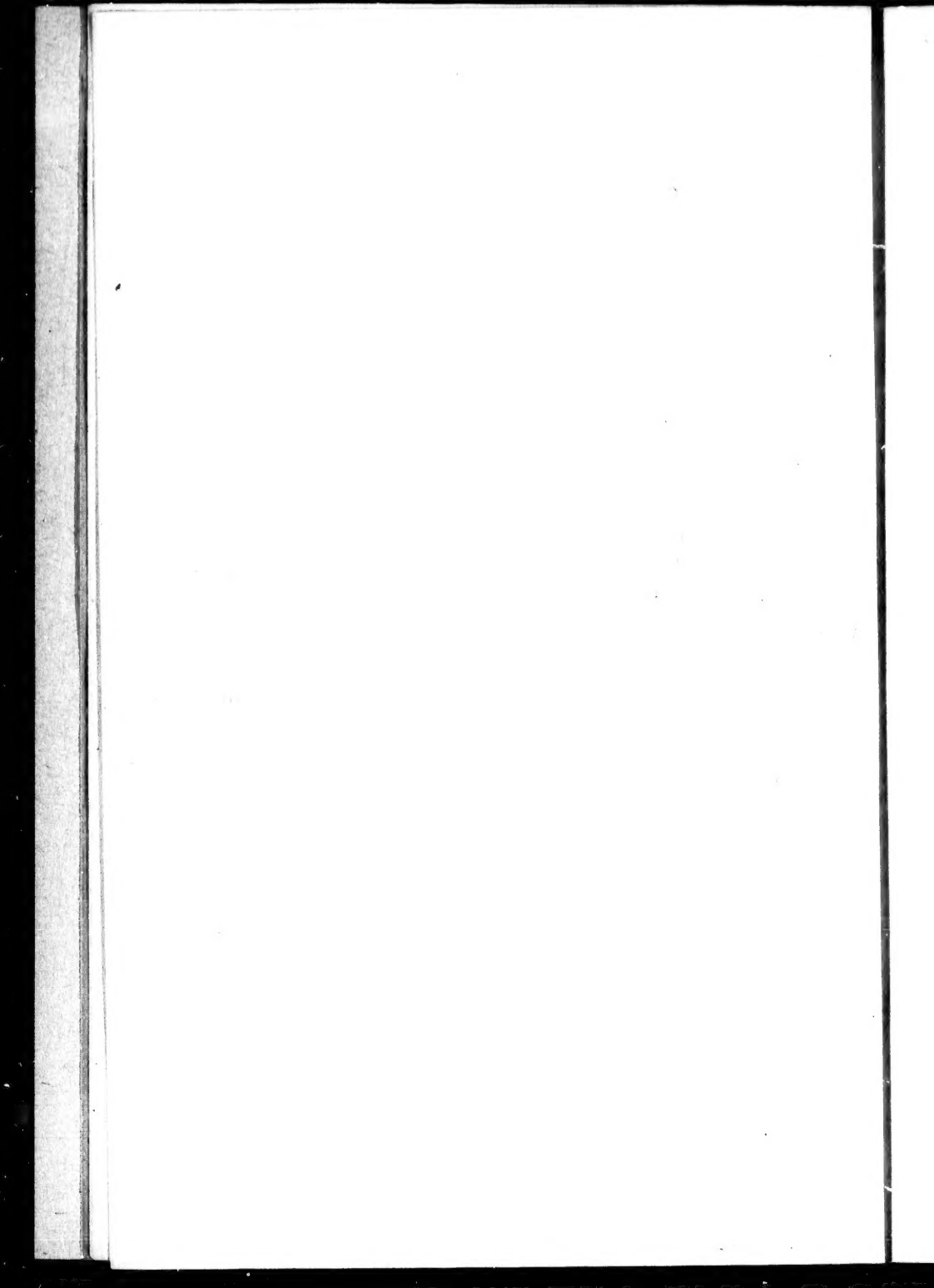
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THE following pages contain a brief sketch of the history of Trinity Church, and of the circumstances under which it was built. These are calculated to awaken the feelings of veneration and respect for the Loyal men by whose pious zeal it was erected. The Sermon was penned under the persuasion that it is highly desirable to cherish these recollections, not only as a mark of respect for those who are gone, but as a means of usefulness to those who are yet to come; and it is dedicated to the Congregation of Trinity Church, and the Parishioners, generally, of the Parish of Saint John, with the sincere desire and prayer, that, while they delight to honor the memories of their predecessors, they may become "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."



SERMON.

PROVERBS XIII. 22.

"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children."

IN its literal acceptation, you will say, there must be many exceptions to this rule. Some men of piety have no inheritance to leave; and others, who have the inheritance, have not the children to leave it to. All this is true, if you limit the term "inheritance" to worldly riches, and the term "children" to lineal descendants. But this is not necessary. The text may be interpreted in a more enlarged sense; and then it will be found to be always verified. There are none of us, my brethren! that may not leave an inheritance, to those who are to come after us. We are all of us mortal. In a little time, we are to pass away from the scene that now surrounds us; and another generation is to fill the place which we at present occupy. And to that generation we may leave the inheritance of holy example, of pious instruction, of believing prayer,—a reversion to be enjoyed when we are silent in the grave. "A good man" ought to, and will think of this. He will feel that he stands not alone in the midst of God's creation; but in certain relations to those who have gone before him, and to those who are to come after. He has benefited in a thousand ways by the former; and he will endeavour, in some way or other, to transmit the blessing to his successors. Suffer me, then, in this more comprehensive sense, to take the text as a motto for the advice I purpose to offer you this morning.

We meet to-day at a season of the year when we are accustomed to express kind wishes for those around us: we wish a happy New Year to our friends and neighbours. May it be to you, my brethren a year of advancement in the favor of God, and the principles of true religion; and then it cannot fail to be a happy year to you, in its final results!

The season naturally calls upon us, to look with an attentive eye, upon the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*: the *past*, that we may learn from it; the *present*, that we may improve it, and the *future*, that we may provide for it. I deem it, therefore, an auspicious occasion, to carry our thoughts somewhat farther back, and somewhat farther forward, than we have been wont to do; and to inquire, not in reference to our individual history, but our history as a *community*, what *we were at the outset*, what *we are now*, and what *we are likely to be in future*; and, from the comparison, to shew *the present duties that devolve upon us*.

What were we *at the outset*? This is the first point of inquiry. And we have not to travel into remote ages for the solution of it. Antiquities we cannot boast of. As a community, we can only look back on a little more than seventy years. Up to that period, the forest reigned, where the city now reposes. Some humble dwellings were to be found in its vicinity, and in other parts of the Province; but they were few and far between.

And the persons who constituted this community; who were they? Whence came they? What brought them to the desolate wilderness? They were *loyal* men, who left a flourishing country behind them, where they had homes and friends and possessions; and who came, in consequence of their attachment to their sovereign and the constitution under which they were born, to seek a new abode within the British territories.

In these days, perhaps, many would regard them as enthusiasts, and deem the sacrifices they made as needless. But they acted *upon principle*, and derived that principle from their Bible. They found it inscribed there, upon the same page, and in the same verse, "FEAR GOD, HONOR THE KING;"* and, regarding both precepts as divine, they resolved to respect them *both*.

In the progress of human affairs, it is possible that national distinctions may cease. Republics, monarchies, and imperial diadems, may give place to one universal Theocracy. But those days have not come. As yet there are national distinctions. Every commonwealth has its laws, institutions, and subjects; and those subjects are bound to respect its laws, (supposing them to be in harmony with the paramount law of God,) and the sovereign power that maintains them.†

The LOYALISTS who came to these Provinces in 1783, were deeply

* 1 Peter, ii. 17.

† Romans, xiii. 1.

impressed with this conviction. It was this that led them to exchange the city, the village and the cultivated farm, for the rude forest; to surrender the comforts of civilization, for the sadness of the wilderness; the pleasures of refinement, for the hardships of the early settler. The dreary prospect before them, when fully realized, appalled, for a moment, the stoutest hearts; but they remembered *why* they had come, and principle triumphed.

And when they came, what were their *acts*? In *temporal* matters, they may be summed up in a few words. *They earned their living by honest industry*; and, in doing so, encountered privations, which those who have been nurtured in the lap of ease, can form little or no conception of. To enter into the details of these, would require a volume instead of a single sermon. Suffice it to say, they were those privations which cold and hunger, and solitude, are usually attended with.

Do not, however, suppose, that they were, on this account, unhappy. The purest happiness that man can enjoy on earth, is, in a great measure, independent of external circumstances. It depends not upon the locality, the dwelling, or the income, but upon principle within. The servant of God may be happy in the wilderness, as well as in the city. If he has in his soul the principle of living faith, it will make the desert rejoice and blossom. No hour in Jacob's life was more peaceful and happy, than when he slept alone in the wilderness, with the earth for his bed, and the stone for his pillow. It seemed, no doubt, at first, to be a lonely place; but he found it to be "the house of God and the gate of heaven."*

In worldly affairs, the Loyalists had, no doubt, abundant occupation; but did this interfere with their attention to *Spiritual* things? Far from it. They attended, I believe, very generally, to the duties of personal and family religion. They prayed to God, read their Bibles, and instructed their children, rigidly complying with the precept, "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."† They did more. They manifested their *zeal* for the public worship of God. Very shortly after their landing a building was set apart and occupied as a Church. Preparations were subsequently made for erecting a more suitable edifice, but the frame, when prepared for it, was consumed by a disastrous fire. This did not, however, prevent the accomplishment of their design, for we find that on Christmas day, 1791, a little more than seven years after their lan-

* Genesis xxviii. 10-22.

† Ephesians vi. 4.

ing, the Church in which we are now assembled was built, and opened for Divine service.* Yes, to the honor of those loyal men be it said, they reared in the midst of the forest, a building of good materials, chaste architecture, capable of containing a thousand persons; and they did this mainly by their own efforts. Some aid, no doubt, they had from the Mother Country; but it was chiefly through their own contributions, that TRINITY CHURCH was erected. How much may be done for the honor of God and the good of souls, where men are really in earnest about it! The very fact, that such a Church was built at such a time, and under such circumstances, shews us that a little zeal for God can remove mountains of difficulties from our path. True piety will always lead men to value the services of God's house. No good man who has known the advantages of public worship, would be willing to be long deprived of them. We may imagine how persons, circumstanced as the Loyalists were, would realize the sentiment of David when he says, "my soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the Living God;"† and how, on that Christmas morning, when their Church was first opened for Divine Service, they would exclaim in the fervency of devotion—"O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto Him and speak good of his name; for the Lord is gracious, His mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth from generation to generation."‡

We have glanced at the *outset* of our community; we have seen what it *was* a few years since; let us next inquire, *what we are now?*

The contrast is striking indeed, considering the brief period that has elapsed. How changed, for example, is the *scene* from that which presented itself to your predecessors, some sixty or seventy years ago? The spruce tree has yielded to the woodman's stroke; the rock has submitted to the hammer; the log-hut is exchanged for the stately mansion: the silence of the forest for the hum of the busy, commercial City; and instead of a single Church, there are now six within the City and its vicinity, besides various places of worship belonging to other denominations of Christians!

And, as the aspect of the scene is changed, so, my Brethren! are the *tenants* of it. "Your Fathers, where are they?" Where are the men that planted their feet upon the unbroken sod of the wilder-

* See Appendix No. 1.

‡ Psalm c. 3-4.

† Psalm lxxiv. 2.

ness, with the earth for their bed, and the heavens for their covering ? They are gone, with few exceptions, to the silent tomb. Here and there one may be left, "as the shaking of an olive tree, as the glean- ing of grapes when the vintage is done."† For the rest we can only say, "the dust has returned to the earth as it was ; and the spirit has returned unto God who gave it."‡ Happy for those among them, who, while loving their earthly monarch, loved their Saviour too ; and who, in seeking another land as their temporary abode, sought also a better country, that is, an heavenly one !§ Happy for those, who having seen the promises afar off, were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ! || They have found the country they were seeking ; the city which hath foundations ; the temple where they can worship together, the God whom once they "saw through a glass darkly, but now face to face," in all the brightness of his glory.

But, while the scene and its occupants have varied, some things remain essentially the same as in the days of your Fathers.

To begin with the edifice in which we are assembled, I remark, that your place of worship is the same. The Church in which your Fathers worshipped, has not yet yielded to the force of time. For sixty-two years it has afforded to successive generations "an house of prayer" and praise. Thrice have large portions of our City been consumed by fire, but your Church has been preserved. The flames have encompassed it ; they have scorched its sides, and destroyed its tower ; but that tower was no part of the original building.¶ The fabric, as reared by your Forefathers in the midst of the forest, re- mains unharmed, a monument of their zeal, and a lesson to their posterity.

As your *place* of worship, so does the *object* of your worship re- main the same. He never changes.** "He is the Father of Lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."†† In the same language that Israel sang upon the banks of the sea, may you sing at this hour,—*"The Lord is my strength and song ; and He is become my salvation : He is my God and I will prepare him an ha- bitation, my Father's God and I will exalt Him."*‡‡ How cheering to the believer is this thought, "God never changes !" Every thing pertaining to the present world is uncertain. Politics change !

† Isaiah xxiv. 13.

‡ Eccles. xii. 7.

§ Hebrews xi. 16.

|| Hebrews xi. 14.

¶ See extract from abstract of Society P. G. F.—Appendix No. 2.

** Malachi iii. 6.

†† James i. 17.

‡‡ Exodus xv. 8.

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commerce changes ! communities change ! nations change ! Yea, the solid earth, and the heavens above it will change ! They will last their appointed season ; and then wax old as garment ; then, as a vesture, shall they be folded up and laid aside ! But He on whom the believer rests, changes not. " Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever ! " *

It follows from hence that the *principles* of your religion are the same. These, like their great Author, are immutable. Dispensations have varied. The Patriarchal has yielded to the Mosaic ; the Mosaic, in its turn, to the Christian ; but the principles of true religion have never varied. They are founded in the nature of things. They result from the relations in which the creature stands to his Creator, and his fellow-men. " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ; " — " and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. " † On these two commandments the Law and the Prophets are dependent. From these, as the great principles of religion, all holy practice must spring. From these, in all ages and under all dispensations, must emanate, " whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise ; " all proceed exclusively from this one source, the principle of love, implanted in the heart, by the Holy Spirit ; and exercised *supremely* towards God, and *subordinately* towards man.

And here, let me add, as a point which we are deeply concerned to remember, that *the way of salvation remains the same*. To man as a fallen being, one method, and one method only, has been or can be proposed, and that is by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Look back as far as the page of sacred history can carry you, and forward into the dark future, wherever the light of prophecy gleams upon it, and you read the same inscription, — " Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious ; and he that believeth in Him shall not be confounded. " ‡ When Abel brought an offering to God, it was an *animal sacrifice*, and presented through faith in the coming Saviour. § When Abraham looked down through the vista of ages, he saw the day of Christ and was glad. || When Isaiah called upon Zion to arise from the dust and put on her beautiful garments, it was

* Hebrews xiii. 8.

§ Hebrews xi. 4.

† Matthew xxii. 37-39.

|| John viii. 56.

‡ 1 Peter ii. 6.

in the anticipation of His advent, "upon whom the Lord has laid the iniquities of us all."* When the last of the Jewish Prophets sent forth his proclamation, it was to announce "the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings."† When John the Baptist revealed the fact of his arrival, his language was,—“behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”‡ When Jesus himself unfolded the counsels of heaven, his words were emphatically these,—“I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”§ When his Apostles took up the wondrous theme their announcement was the same,—“there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”|| It was this great truth, my brethren! that sounded in the ears of your Fathers, when they worshipped in these courts. It was through faith in that name they found peace with God; through trust in that sacrifice their toils were lightened, and their path in the wilderness cheered with the radiance of heavenly hope; and it is through the same faith and the same sacrifice, that you must travel onward through a polluted world to a holy heaven. Nor will you cease to delight in this theme, when you reach that higher abode; for even there your song will be, “unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”¶

From this thought, my brethren! the transition is easy to the final question we are to ask, and that by no means the least important, viz:—*What shall we be in future?* It is a question, as you will readily admit, more easy to ask than to answer, and one to which no answer can be given with certainty. Still it is highly desirable to direct our thoughts to this point, and consider what the probabilities are in regard to it.

What then are we to be in future, *in respect to temporal things?* Here, it must be admitted, all seems promising. Your commerce is extending, your wealth increasing, your population augmenting. Your City, untouched by the calamities that have lately visited others, is rapidly rising in importance; your Province, remote from the wars that are desolating other lands, is becoming the centre of improvements, which seem destined to elevate it far beyond its present position. In short, the present year opens upon you, as far as

* Isaiah liii. 6.

† Malachi iv. 2.

‡ John i. 29.

§ John xiv. 6.

|| Acts iv. 12.

¶ Rev. i. 5-6.

worldly prospects are concerned, with the promise of unexampled prosperity.

But how is this to affect us in *spiritual* things? Shall we become more humble as we become more rich? more holy as we become more prosperous? more thoughtful of God and of his claims as we possess more of this world's goods? Are we likely to use this world as not abusing it? Will the goodness of God lead us to repentance? Will the ten talents he now entrusts us with be employed for his glory, or merely for worldly objects? Shall "the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe and wine be in our feasts, and we regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands?"*

The question, what shall we be in spiritual things? surpasses, in importance, all human calculation, because upon this depends the question, what shall we be in that vast future, which stretches out into a never-ending eternity? It is by our spiritual state here, that our spiritual state hereafter will be determined. The tone, the spirit of our minds, which we cherish in this life, will follow us beyond the tomb. The severance of soul and body will not reverse it. The reunion of them, at the last trump, will not alter it. The present world is our training-school for eternity. The objects we love most here, we shall love most in the world to come. Mark this carefully. Be not deceived upon this point. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."†

Supposing, however, that you are duly impressed with these truths, that you see, in all its reality, the importance of providing for your own spiritual welfare, the next question is, *what provision are you making for the future welfare of others*, especially that of your children and dependents, who have the strongest claims upon you? In looking back on the conduct of your predecessors, you have seen that they were not forgetful of this duty. Difficult as their position was; circumscribed as their means were, they thought of the souls of their posterity; and, not only thought of them, but laboured for them, and gave up their worldly earnings to benefit them. They built a Church, as we have seen, capacious enough to hold, not merely themselves but their successors for many years afterwards. And who can tell, my brethren! how many among these successors may have benefited by their benevolence? Who, on this

* Isaiah v. 12.

† Galatians vi. 7.

side eternity, can know how many, in the intervening years, have sat within these walls, and listened, with effect, to the tidings of salvation? Who can estimate the number who have been truly converted, and led to Christ, by listening to the gospel in this Church? You cannot tell; and I cannot tell how many; but this I may venture to assert, viz: that if one single soul has been led to a Saviour, and through that Saviour to Heaven, the result has been worth all their labor, and all their contributions towards it; for those contributions at best were perishable in their nature; the value of them to their possessors could only last a few short years; but that soul can never die; its joys can never terminate. It has derived from their benevolence inexhaustible treasures. It has been saved from an everlasting Hell; and has gone beyond the reach of sin and trouble, to drink of the rivers of pleasures at God's right hand for evermore.

Are you, my brethren, as zealous as your predecessors were for the good of others; for the *spiritual* good of others; for the *souls* of your posterity? If so, you will very shortly have an opportunity of proving it. There are certain improvements which may be made in this building, which your ancestors reared, by which their benevolent designs may be carried still further into effect; by which the accommodation in it may be extended, and its usefulness as a Church, be secured for many years to come. What these improvements are it is not necessary at present to explain. You have found in your pews, to day, a notice of a meeting, to be held on Thursday evening next, which you are invited to attend. The nature of the improvements alluded to will there be fully explained to you, and the necessity pointed out for a liberal contribution, on the part of the Parishioners, to carry them into effect.* Your opinion in regard to the propriety of these measures, I do not presume to anticipate. All I ask is, that if, when they are submitted to your consideration you deem them important, you will then come forward in the spirit of your ancestors, and contribute towards their accomplishment. They, in their poverty, built this house for *their* children; and shall we, in our prosperity, be less zealous for the welfare of *ours*? No—let us look back, and be thankful; forward, and be generous. Let us thank God for what our predecessors did for us; and shew our thankfulness by doing something for our successors. Let us go out into our city and gather from Israel, money to repair the House of our God,† so that from year to year, your sons and your sons'

* Appendix No. 3.

† 2 Chron. xxiv. 5.

sons, may continue, within these walls, to worship the God of their Fathers.

But, finally, while I urge this as a duty, which it is incumbent upon you to discharge for the benefit of your posterity, do not overlook the paramount one, of building up *yourselves* in your most holy faith. It is of little avail, as far as we are personally concerned, to rear the material temple for others, unless we ourselves belong to the spiritual one: unless, individually, we are living stones in that building, of which Christ is the corner stone. O see to it, my brethren! that you occupy your true position there. See to it, that *you* yourselves become the temples of the Holy Ghost, the habitation of God through the Spirit. See to it, that, having been bought with a price, and that price the precious blood of Christ, you glorify God, in your bodies and your spirits, which are his. Then you will attain, yourselves, to a fairer inheritance than this world can give; and you will leave the benefit of your holy example, as "an inheritance to your children's children." AMEN.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

In the year 1838, WILLIAM SCOVIL, Esq., who, for many years, was a zealous Member of Trinity Church, and of the Corporation connected therewith, handed to the Vestry the following extract, taken from the Abstract of the Society P. G. F., for 1793 :

"Dr. BYLES, of St. John, relates the like increase of his congregation, and that THE NEW CHURCH WAS OPENED ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1791, when he administered to sixty communicants, and, on the following Easter Day, to eighty. In the course of a year, he had baptized fifty-five, married forty, and buried twenty. He mentions a present of a Bell, of eight hundred pounds weight, from Mr. THOMPSON, a principal Merchant in St. John, and from Mr. WHITLOCK, another considerable Merchant, a very elegant crimson furniture for the Communion Table, Pulpit, and Desk."

No. 2.

In the Abstract of the Society, for 1811, the following, report from Dr. BYLES, is contained :—

"The Rev. Dr. BYLES, Missionary at St. John, has the satisfaction to acquaint the Society, that his Mission continues in a flourishing state, and that the communicants increase. *A steeple has been placed on the Church.* × His Assistant, Mr. ROGER VIETS, officiates alternately at Carleton. His conduct is unexceptionable and prudent; and he is of great help to Dr. Byles. During the year, the baptisms have been sixty-one, marriages, forty-three, burials, twenty-three."

No. 3.

At a Vestry Meeting, held on the 29th December, 1853, the following Resolutions were passed :—

Whereas, in accordance with a certain resolution, adopted at a meeting of the Vestry, on the 1st instant, it was deemed desirable that certain additions and improvements to Trinity Church, and the grounds connected with said Church, should be made; and

Whereas a considerable amount remains due and owing for the building and completion of the Sunday School House attached to Trinity Church, which said sum is required to be paid off; and

APPENDIX.

Whereas, for the attainment of the above object, a large amount, estimated at no less than £2000, would be required; and

Inasmuch as the present income of the Church Corporation is not more than sufficient to defray the Annual Expenditure of said Corporation, thus precluding the practicability of any appropriations from the Corporate Funds to said objects;—

Therefore Resolved,—That a Meeting of the Parishioners and Pewholders connected with Trinity Church and the Parish is deemed desirable, with a view of submitting the foregoing resolutions, and ascertaining whether, in the event of their being favourably received, voluntary contributions can be obtained, to enable the Church Corporation to carry into effect the objects contemplated.

And further,—that in accordance with the foregoing resolution, the proposed Meeting of the Parishioners should take place on Thursday the fifth day of January, at Seven, P. M., at the Sunday School Room, when suitable resolutions should be submitted for the consideration and approval of the Parishioners so assembled.

The above named Meeting was held at the time and place referred to, and resolutions were passed, approving of the objects proposed by the Vestry;—though owing to other meetings occurring on the same evening, but few, comparatively, attended, a subscription list was opened, and the sum of £710 subscribed at once, by a few individuals, and a Committee appointed to make an appeal, individually, to all the Pewholders, Parishioners, and attendants at Trinity Church.

*The Church was enlarged
New Font tower & Steeple
as at time of Fire 1877.*

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